## REMARKS

**The Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112**

Claims 4 and 8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. Accordingly, the claims have been amended as requested by Examiner, and should now overcome the rejections.

**The Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)**

Claims 1-6 and 8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,262,487 to *Igarashi et al.* ("*Igarashi*") in view of Applicants' admitted prior art ("*AAPA*"). Applicant respectfully traverses, noting that neither *Igarashi* nor *AAPA* discloses every element of Applicants' claims as amended. More specifically, neither discloses signal wiring passing obliquely over adjacent sides of a function block, and connecting buffering cells adjacent to the function block.

***Igarashi***

With respect to FIG. 13C of *Igarashi*, *Igarashi* discloses a triangular buffer cell 183 within cell row 80. Even if cell row 80 can be construed as a function block, it can be seen that the buffer cell 183 lies within the cell row 80, not outside the cell row 80, and certainly not outside and adjacent to a side of the cell row 80. Furthermore, even if *Igarashi* discloses more than one buffer cell 183, it does not disclose any signal wiring connecting such buffer cells. At most, the signal wiring 173 disclosed in *Igarashi* only connects the buffer cell 183 to adjacent wiring 161, 162 or possibly to a neighboring cell row 80. The signal wiring 173 does not connect two buffer cells, and thus cannot connect two buffer cells in an oblique manner relative to adjacent sides of a function block.

***AAPA***

*AAPA* does not cure the deficiency of *Igarashi*. Even if signal wiring 4a-4c connects buffering cells, it does so by passing around the edges of function block 2. The signal wiring 4a-4c does not pass over function block 2 at all, and thus cannot pass over the function block 2 obliquely relative to adjacent sides of the function block 2.

As above, *Igarashi* does not disclose a signal wiring connecting two buffer cells that each lie outside a function block. *Igarashi* thus cannot disclose such a signal wiring, where the signal wiring also passes over a function block obliquely relative to adjacent sides of the function block. Similarly, *AAPA* also does not disclose signal wiring that passes obliquely over any sides of a function block. Applicants' amended claim 1 is therefore patentable over both references for at least the reason that it recites "a signal wiring passing over the function block obliquely relative to the first side and the second side, connecting the first buffering cell and the second buffering cell." Likewise, Applicants' amended claim 8 is patentable for at least the reason that it recites a signal wiring "passing obliquely across a corner between a first side and a second side of the function block, and connecting a first buffering cell . . . to a second buffering cell . . . ." the remaining pending claims depend from claim 1, and are thus also patentable for at least this same reason.

## CONCLUSION

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 1-6 and 8 are now in condition for allowance.

The Examiner is invited to call Applicant's attorney at the number below in order to speed the prosecution of this application.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Deposit Account No. 07-1896 referencing Attorney Docket No. 352003-991320.

Respectfully submitted,

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